THE WORLD.

NUMBER CXXXVII.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *Auguſt* the 14th, 1755.

MY correſpondent of to-day will, I hope, excuſe me for not publiſhing his letter ſooner. To confeſs the truth, I had ſome thoughts of making an apology to him for not publiſhing it at all; having conceived an opinion that it might tend to leſſen thoſe exalted ideas which the world has always entertained of us men of learning. But though upon reconſideration I have changed my mind, I muſt take the liberty of obſerving, by way of introduction, that as I modeſtly preſume no man living has more learning than myſelf,

myſelf, ſo no man values himſelf more upon it, or has a greater veneration for all thoſe who poſſeſs it, even though they ſhould poſſeſs nothing elſe. I remember to have ſeen it under my grandmother's own hand, in the new primer ſhe gave me at my firſt going to ſchool, that *learning is better than houſe and land:* and though I cannot ſay that I have ever been in a ſituation to make the proper compariſon between LEARNING and HOUSE and LAND; yet my grandmother was a wiſe woman, and I had never reaſon to call in queſtion the truth of any of her ſayings.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM,

SIR,

IT is with pleaſure I obſerve, that you commonly avoid the ridiculous oſtentation of prefixing a ſcrap of antiquity to your lucubrations. Your practice confirms me in my opinion, that a line or two of Greek and Latin, is neither uſeful nor ornamental to a paper intended for the benefit of all ſorts of readers.

IT was excuſable in your predeceſſors, the Tatler, Spectator and Guardian; for in their time we had fine gentlemen, one out of twenty of whom could, perhaps, make a ſhift to pick out the meaning of a Latin couplet. But now-a-days, the caſe is altered; it is pedantry to know any other language, or, at leaſt, to ſeem to know any, but the faſhionable modern ones. For my own part, I by no means approve of motto's, which I doubt not are often thought of after the piece is written; and if not, muſt confine the writer too cloſely to the ſenſe of them. The ſame objection I have to numerous quotations from the ancients; for why ſhould we ſpeak in a leſs intelligible language, what may be as pertinently and juſtly expreſſed in our own? It is with reaſon then, that in our days a man is no more reputed a

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ſcholar for quoting Homer and Virgil, than he would be eſteemed a man of morals for reading Tully and Seneca; and a Greek motto is thought as unneceſſary to a good eſſay, as a head of Otho or Galba would be to a learned man, if it was ſlung round his ſhoulders. Indeed, to ſpeak my mind, if the uſe of a language is to arrive at the ſenſe, wit, and arts conveyed by it, I ſee no reaſon why our own ſhould yield to any other, ancient or modern. It is copious and manly, though not regular; and has books in every branch of the arts and ſciences, written with a ſpirit and judgment not to be exceeded. Notwithſtanding which, a man verſed in Greek and Latin, and nothing elſe, ſhall be called learned; while another, leſs knowing in theſe, who has imbibed the ſenſe, ſpirit and knowledge of all the beſt authors in our own language, is denied that honourable title.

I OWN to you, Mr. Fitz-Adam, that he who would lay in a ſtore of prudent and judicious maxims for the direction of his conduct in life, can do it no where more effectually, than from the invaluable works of antiquity. But is it abſolutely neceſſary that he ſhould do this from the very languages in which they were written? I am myſelf what is called a good Greek and Latin ſcholar; and yet I believe I might be maſter of as much true knowledge, if I underſtood neither. There are many good reaſons to be given why the ſtudy of theſe languages ought to be cultivated; but I think this purſuit may be carried too far; and that much of the time ſpent in acquiring a critical knowledge of them, might be employed to more advantage. I ſpeak in general; for there are ſome, who have a genius particularly ſuited to the ſtudy of words, that would never make any figure in the ſtudy of things.

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THERE is hardly any thing truly valuable in the dead languages, that may not be read with equal advantage and ſatisfaction in the living, and more particularly in our own: for if I may rely upon my own judgment, and the report of learned men, many of the beſt ancient authors have loſt little by their tranſlation into our ſoil. I am charmed with the Greek of Thucydides and Longinus; but I am likewiſe delighted with the French dreſs of the laſt, and Mr. Smith's Engliſh of both. I can diſtinguiſh the gentility and eaſe of Cicero, and the ſpirit and neatneſs of Pliny, in their epiſtles, as they are tranſlated by Mr. Melmoth. Will any man that has ſeen Mr. Pope's Homer, lament that he has not read him in the original? And will not every man of a true taſte admire the gaiety and good-ſenſe of Horace, the gallantry and genteel careleſſneſs of Ovid, the fire and energy of Juvenal, and the paſſion of Tibullus, in the paraphraſes and tranſlations of Donne, Dryden, Garth, Congreve and Hammond? I inſtance theſe, as their beauties are with more difficulty transferred into a foreign language.

IT would be endleſs to enumerate the Engliſh poems that perhaps equal any thing in Greek or Latin. The Paradiſe Loſt will be thought little inferior to the Iliad or Æneid in judgment, majeſty, and true poetic fire. The Eſſay on Criticiſm, I need not ſcruple to compare with the Epiſtle to the Piſo's; nor to prefer the Dunciad, Eſſay on Man, and the Ethic epiſtles to any of the productions of antiquity. And will you not join with me in preferring Alexander's feaſt to all the extravagance of Pindar, in point of harmony, and power of expreſſion and numbers? The poets, it is true, had different views; but notwithſtanding, there may be a compariſon.

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To enlarge farther, would carry me beyond the limits I propoſe to myſelf; I ſhall therefore conclude my remarks on this kind of writing, with obſerving, that if we fall ſhort of the ancients in any part of polite writing, it is in the method of dialogue, in which ſome of them, as Xenophon, Plato and Tully, had moſt excellent talents: and yet I know not whether the dialogue on medals, and the minute philoſopher may not rival any thing they have left behind them: for as to their political writings, no man will think them equal to the Letters on patriotiſm, and the idea of a patriot king. In hiſtory we are certainly deficient, though Raleigh, Clarendon and a few others are excellent in their kinds; but we as certainly make it up in mathematics, natural philoſophy, phyſic, and in the many excellent treatiſes we have in morality, politics and civil prudence.

It is not my intention to reſume a ſubject that has already employed much abler pens; and to raiſe a diſpute about the comparative merits of the ancients and moderns; nor would I by any means diſcourage the ſtudy of the ancient languages; for I think the time I ſpent in acquiring them extremely well employed: but I would willingly perſuade ſuch as are not maſters of them, that they may become ſcholars and learned men with no other aſſiſtance than their own native Engliſh. I am ſure I think the man more deſerving of thoſe names, who is converſant with Bacon, Boyle, Locke and Newton, than he who is unacquainted with theſe great philoſophers, though he ſhould have read Plato, Ariſtotle and all the orators and poets of antiquity.

You will now, no doubt, be curious to know who I am, that decide ſo magiſterially in a point ſo long given up, and of ſo much conſequence to the republic of letters.